

I also want to say to you that in spite of all you have done, I think it is imperative that we not stop until the peace here has a life of its own, until it can endure without us. We have worked too hard to let this go.

I thank the Members of Congress from both parties who have come here out of concern for you and your work. I want to say a special work of thanks again to Senator Dole. He said something to me on the phone the other day; he says so many things that are funny and pithy that if I start stealing his lines without attribution, I'll get in trouble. So I want to tell you—he said this to me. We were talking about Bosnia, and he said, "Look, it's worked." He said, "I didn't necessarily agree with everything you did, but on the whole this thing has worked. And this is like being in a football game, and we're ahead. It's the fourth quarter. Who wants to walk off the field and forfeit the game? We ought to stay here, finish the game, and take home the win for the world and for freedom." And that's exactly what I intend to do, thanks to what you have proven that America can stand for and that we can accomplish. And again I say, thank you very, very much.

One other thing, just for my information. How many of you here are on your second tour here? [*Cheers*] I met a young man today; I said, "How long have you been in the Army?" He said, "I've been in the Army 5 years." And he said, "The last time I saw you, I was in Haiti." He said in 5 years he's done two tours in Haiti and one tour in Bosnia. Just sort of laying around, you know. [*Laughter*]

I don't think many Americans understand exactly how deep the burdens are on our men and women in uniform today. Because we have downsized the military in the aftermath of the cold war, when we take on these responsibilities, it is very hard for a lot of people. We rotate these missions a little more rapidly than we

would like to. We draw out Reservists and Guardsmen more often than we would like to. But you have always done what you were asked to do. And you have always delivered for America.

So on this Christmas season I ask the American people, who will see this on television tonight or tomorrow, to remember what we owe to the soldiers, the sailors, the airmen, the marines of the Armed Forces at home and around the world, in the Persian Gulf, on the DMZ in Korea, here in Bosnia. Our Nation is at peace and our people are secure because of you. Our country can grow stronger and more prosperous. Our people can live out their dreams. Our children can sleep well because of you. Your sacrifice makes this possible.

I think that one of the things that you may wonder is whether people back home know you're here and appreciate what you're doing. Since you've done it so well, there aren't any visible problems, and you make it look easy.

I got a fascinating letter the other day from the mother of a soldier stationed in Camp Eagle, Specialist Christina Campbell. And the mother said, "So as you get busy spreading holiday cheer, don't forget the peacekeepers and those they hold dear." And Specialist Campbell actually wrote a poem. So I want to tell you, I took just a little bit out of it, because I want you to know that at this Christmas you are in the hearts of the American people. And her words are your words. Listen to these; she says, "No, this is not our soil, and it's not our own fight. But if you've seen what I have, then you know that it's right."

God bless you all, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. at Club 21. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Larry R. Ellis, USA, commander, 1st Armored Division.

Message on the Observance of Christmas, 1997 December 22, 1997

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Christmas.

At this time of year, when the nights grow longer and often colder, our lives are brightened

and our hearts warmed by the lights of Christmas. So much light surrounds our memories and celebration of Christmas: candlelight in the windows, colored lights twinkling on the tree,

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children's faces lit with a joy that is reflected in their parents' eyes. The beloved Christmas story itself is a story of light, for, as the Gospel of John tells us, Jesus came into the world as "the true Light" that illumines all humankind.

Almost 2,000 years later, that Light still shines amid the dark places of our world. It is reflected in the lives of so many quiet and generous people who strive daily to make life better for others—feeding the hungry, caring for the ill and elderly, cherishing and nurturing children. It radiates from the hearts of those who work for peace and justice in their communities, our nation, and the world. It shines in the efforts of

men and women striving to break down the walls of fear, ignorance, and prejudice that cast shadows across too many lives and prevent us from becoming the people God intended us to be.

May all who celebrate Christmas this year rejoice in the special gifts of light that it brings: the love that warms our hearts, the faith that lights our journey, and the hope that promises us a bright future. Hillary and I wish you joy and peace during this Christmas season and much happiness in the New Year.

BILL CLINTON

Message on the Observance of Kwanzaa, 1997

December 22, 1997

Warm greetings to everyone observing Kwanzaa.

As America embarks on a season of renewal and reconciliation, the principles of Kwanzaa—unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith—ring true not only for African Americans, but also for all Americans. By emphasizing the importance of family in our lives and the blessings that come with a true commitment to community, opportunity, and responsibility, the celebration of Kwanzaa can help us to enter the future as a stronger nation and a more compassionate and united people.

The symbols and ceremony of Kwanzaa, evoking the rich history and heritage of African Americans, remind us that our nation draws much of its strength from our diversity. As millions of Americans observe Kwanzaa this year, let us renew our commitment to realizing America's promise as a land where all people are free to pursue our common dreams—to live in peace, to provide for our families, and to give our children the opportunity for a better life.

Hillary joins me in sending best wishes for a joyous Kwanzaa.

BILL CLINTON

Statement on the Death of Esther Peterson

December 22, 1997

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Esther Peterson. She was the mother of the modern consumer movement, a woman who dedicated her life to improving the standard of living for all Americans. In her long career, she was a trusted adviser to President Kennedy, President Johnson, and President Carter. I was

grateful for her sage counsel and for her service to this country. As a member of the United States delegation to the United Nations, she was dedicated to promoting American values at home and abroad. She will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with her children and grandchildren.